

**Notes from  
GRSMMP Session Discussions  
At RRCT meeting  
11 and 12 July 2007 – St. Petersburg, FL**

Larry Parson opened the meeting by summarizing the efforts to date relative to developing a sediment management master plan for the Gulf Region. Meeting participants included members of the RRCT and other Gulf Alliance meeting participants. He presented slides on the “focus area teams” that are being formed to develop the material to go into and to shape the Plan (slides will be posted on the Gulf Alliance working website:

<http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/gomex/restoration/welcome.html> )

Following the introductory presentation, there was discussion of issues related to Authorities, Policies and Funding<sup>1</sup> and sediment management. This was initiated using a “strawman list” of issues derived from past RRCT workshops and conference calls.

Much of the discussion focused on managing sediment dredged by the Corps from navigation channels, however it was noted that the master plan should include other sediments as well, and additional stakeholders were identified to be included in developing the GRSMMP.

Additional issues and comments were added during the discussions. These were “roughly grouped” at the end of the session, and presented to participants the next morning. On the July 12<sup>th</sup> participants applied a “dot vote” method to give a “preliminary ranking for sequencing” the issues to be addressed. It was noted that some of the issues on this rough list could be further grouped, and others were more “informational topics” that could be useful in future discussions in developing the master plan.

Included at the end of these notes are “strawman list of issues” and the results of the “dot vote.” Below is an “annotated” list of issues and comments generated during discussions with participants at the GRSMMP session 11 and 12 July.

**Annotated and “regrouped” list of issues and comments from July 11-12 discussions:**

1. **Issue: Federal standard/Base Plan** – greater flexibility desired; suggestion to develop a white paper w/alternatives and recommendations; Look at benefit/cost requirements – policy adjustment to rethink “least cost” requirement in Fed standard, and constraints in considering long term environmental costs.
  - Environmental benefits – including information about in beneficial use planning
  - Better account for ecosystem services in considering dredged material mgt and BU opportunities

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<sup>1</sup> Current team members for this focus area include: John B, Carl F, Greg D, Ray N, Kris B, Rafael C, Lynn M, Ric R– NMFS per Miles – not all members were at the meeting. The session was a “meeting of opportunity” in conjunction with the Gulf Alliance Conference. RRCT members present participated in discussions of issues associated with developing the GRSMMP.

- Consider “life cycle costs” in dredged material management planning - not just short term costs; Could reduce costs for “mitigation” by using the dredged material beneficially; Kent Smith, George R
  - Evaluating benefits of restoration projects – for coastal flood risk reduction
2. **Information: Variability in dredged material disposal options depending upon project;** *important in understanding what flexibilities exist for each navigation project and proposed beneficial uses of material from the project.*
- Older projects - that are fully federally maintained more constrained; however the Section 204 authority allows Corps to cost share w/States and others to use the material beneficially -for habitat restoration.
  - Specification of dredged material placement - Mobile bay -specified in the authorizing document; not all projects like this -many others are specified in the Chief’s report; least cost environmentally acceptable –
  - Federal authorities and policies related to sediment management – Corps has a tech note summarizing; other agencies?
  - Section 216 - reevaluation of existing project - studies needs and make recommendations to Congress on changes to the project or it’s operations - re-evaluation is cost shared too.
3. **Information (Issue?) State of LA has a new policy to use DM beneficially;** COE regularly builds marsh in Mississippi Pass in conjunction w/maintenance dredging; WRDA proposal to dredge and slurry pipeline sediment to restoration projects; how funded?
- LA Restoration Project (LCA) - has a “beneficial use component” - a program that ID’d where we need to place material – pre-cleared for when it becomes available when the channel needs dredged; streamlined authorization - matching needs and sed availability, and getting the permits in place; LA has funds to cost share -CWPPRA funds - rotaty funds sep from CIAP.
  - material to GRSMMP team – Dugan and Bob ??
4. **Information - State authorities and policies relevant to sediment management;** what are they?
- Suggested a Regional Policy to make BU part of every project in the Gulf where it makes sense (Dugan); Do other states have related policies?
  - In LA: selfish leases had been an impediment to using dredged material to restore habitat in Louisiana, but the State has taken action to resolve this – legal determination that these are state water bottoms so material can be placed there in support of the State’s restoration plan.
  - Real estate clearances – ownership; LA ‘s plan does not yet include the land rights//real estate provisions for the restoration projects.
  - **BU innovations case studies (Dugan)** – Look at what transpired to enable the BU - state-COE programs - e.g. in a State wildlife mgt area - state may have changed laws/- what were the impediments that were over come - case histories -Pass a Loutre (Otter Pass ) – delta
  - **Sand wars** (information to inform competition for sediment resources in a region)

**5. Issue -- Interstate transfer of sediments**

- E.g. Illinois - proposed shipping sediment from impoundment lakes to LA; from elsewhere too. Question about sediment chemistry/compatibility relative to the use. Peoria Lake - chemistry and characteristics are suitable - where do you put 3-4 bargeloads; expensive to transport, unload, handle, etc.
- Examining using material from CDFs nearing capacity in other states for restoration and other sediment needs in LA

**6. Issue: Funding and Cost-Sharing related:**

- **Lack of Corps funding for Sec 206, 1135, 204** - e.g. St Andrews Inlet (SAM) - had permits in place but the Corps funding didn't come thru; some examples in TX too? Identify other examples?
- Cost share requirements for Continuing Authority program
- **NOAA Natural Resources Damage Assessment Settlement Funds** as a cost share. No consistent answer from Corps re: whether these funds can be used as non-federal share? - Fed and state trustees get a settlement the funds are neither federal or state - trustees can include ... would like to use the funds for restoration cost-share;
- **Nat Estuary Restoration Proposal request** - specifically specified that these funds cannot be used - check w/the Council
- **CIAP** – use of these funds for restoration [is this a state pr project type specific issue?]
- **Identify funding needed for Sediment Budget studies** – include both coastal and watershed systems - once the plan is developed, in 18 mos, what are the gaps and what are the funding needs and means to fill them? [*ask Sediment processes focus area to identify*]

**7. Issue – Mechanisms to enable use of dredged material from emergency dredging**

(shoaling due to storms) rather than have it placed off shore. Be proactive - next hurricane and substantial shoaling - be prepared to place the material; think ahead, discuss options ahead of time for using the material beneficially; need pre-approved/agreed to sites, and have the compliance ironed out ahead of time. Established sediment mgt team(s).

**8. Issue - Hurricane debris (non-sediment)-** should this be part of the GRS MMP? –

[*recommended send to R2 Group for their consideration*]

**9. Issue: conflicting ecological needs -**

- Dredged material management plans and bird use of disposal sites – conflicts
- Turtle habitat sediment compatibility; fish - sturgeon; EFH value

[*recommend giving these items to the “Restoration Coordination focus area” team?*]

**10. Issue: Better coordination and communication between dredging and restoration.**

- Stockpiling dredged sediment resources for future use in restoration. - preagree upon place requirements, especially important in areas where you know you will be using the sediment in the future; Mobile and FL - timing issues; looked at stockpiling - site location was as difficult to get as a disposal area because of the adverse env effects

- (bay bottom and other habitat loss) - therefor needs buy-in from everyone ahead of time
  - Houston ship channel and Galveston Island – good experiences to share
  - Many/all districts hold dredging conferences where they discuss anticipated/projected dredging each year - dependent upon whether the channels need dredged.
  - Disposal site capacity –
  - Dredged Material Management Planning - can consider beneficial uses; new deepening projects need DMMPs too.
  - **IDEA – form sediment mgt teams for each state to address all the permits and coordination needed to be more proactive**– State WQ, CZM, Restoration folks, FWS, COE, NMFS, other
    - Better coordination among MMS, Corps and USGS
11. **Information: Dredge types and their uses.** Pipeline disposal vs clamshell, hopper – dredge type implications for restoration options types of dredging equipment – under what circumstances it is used, and how it places material – Mobile District presentation might be useful – Larry P will check
12. **Additional players in GRSMMP –**
- Ports – as stakeholders and innovators
  - National Park Service
  - Home owners assoc
  - Dredging industry- they have ideas on how they can contribute to BU – Kerry – e.g. pipeline dredging; talk to them about innovations
13. **Information - Smaller dredging projects** - state and private - smaller quantities of material available; what are the requirements for disposal of this material? Kerry - they look for least cost too. Distance to place the material where the state may want it could be expensive; oil and gas companies; 404 and 401 certification required.
14. **Information: Plan should discuss range of “sediment management measures”** –i.e. activities that influence sediment movement and availability – Examples include:
- Dredging and placement – or navigation, restore reservoir capacity, habitat restoration,
  - Diverting, trapping, interrupting sediment flows;
  - Erosion protection for riverbanks, shorelines, streambeds
  - Habitat restoration and protection
  - Sand and gravel mining for construction or other purposes
  - Other
15. **Information: GRSMMP Scope - Sediment budget and transport should not be constrained to the open coast;** (George R (MS)); implications from sand trapped in reservoirs; Pascagoula transport processes changes the watershed; How do you dredge a lake the size of Texoma and what do you do with the material?

- Also, similar to nutrient criteria ( 3 different ones in fresh, brackish, saline waters), sediment budgets may have to be zoned too. --\*\*[ relay this to the Sediment process focus area].

**16. Information: Consider use of wetlands for flood water storage** – recommended by the R2 group

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- RRCT conf call July 25<sup>th</sup> Wed – incl these notes when we send out the notice for the call
- GRSMMP conf call on Thurs the 26<sup>th</sup> 1 or 2 central – Larry will send out notice

Larry add:

- Lenora Wright SWD to list, per Jay Gamble
- [Ronnie.Taylor@NOAA.gov](mailto:Ronnie.Taylor@NOAA.gov) - National Geodetic Survey – advisor to FL; 301-713-1054 , and 850-245-2610. Contributions via work on elevations; Tampa Bay – dredging implications, also levees – datums: vert and horizontal. Ronnie will be initial contact, may suggest another staff person.

## Enclosure 1:

### **Strawman list of GRSMMP issues related to Authorities, Policies, Funding** (derived from RRCT/GRSMMP team discussions and workshops)

- Federal standard – greater flexibility – white paper w/alternatives and recommendations - Look at benefit/cost requirements – policy adjustment to rethink least cost requirement
- Environmental benefits – including information about in beneficial use planning
- Evaluating benefits of restoration projects – for coastal flood risk reduction
- State authorities and policies regarding sediment management – what are they? Identify?
- Make BU part of every project in the Gulf where it makes sense;
- Federal authorities and policies related to sediment management – Corps has a tech note summarizing; other agencies?
- Lack of funding for sec 204 & 206
- Cost share requirements for Continuing Authority program
- Sand wars (information to inform?)
- Advocate for funding for beneficial use
- Dredged material management plans and bird use of disposal sites – conflicts
- Turtle habitat sediment compatibility
- CIAP – use of these funds for restoration [is this a sediment specific issue?]
- Better coordination and communication between dredging and restoration.
- Better coordination among MMS, Corps and USGS
- Process issue: length of time between authorization and appropriations
- Additional players in GRSMMP –
  - o Ports – as stakeholders and innovators
  - o National Park Service

## Enclosure 2:

### **“Dot Vote” Results**

**Group ranking of initial list of issues – The ranking below provides a preliminary sense of for the “sequencing” in which the Policy, Authorities and Funding Issues team might tackle the preliminary list of issues identified thus far during discussions at GRSMMP workshops and conference calls. The ranking below is based on a “dot vote” at GRSMMP meeting 12 July at the FL RRCT meeting. Note this was based on the *very rough grouping* of issues generated during discussions the day before. Not all of the States were represented during either day, and not all of the first day participants were able to make it to the discussion on second day (12 July).**

Votes	Issue
11	16. Better coordination and communication between dredging and restoration.
10	1. Federal standard/Base Plan – greater flexibility – white paper w/alternatives and recommendations - Look at benefit/cost requirements –

policy adjustment to rethink least cost requirement

- 4        2. The Flexibility for new disposal options varies by project.
- 3        18. Additional players in GRSMMP –
- 3        4. State authorities and policies regarding sediment management – what are they? Identify?
- 3        5. Lack of funding for Sec 1135 & 206, 204? - e.g Alabama project had permits in place but the Corps funding didn't come thru; some examples in TX too? Other examples?
- 2        15. CIAP – use of these funds for restoration [is this a state pr project type specific issue?]
- 2        6. Emergency dredging - be proactive - next hurricane and substantial shoaling - be prepared to place the material ; think ahead for the emergency dredging - having options ahead of time and a plan may be able to use the material beneficially - pre-approved/agreed to - compliance ironed out ahead of time. Established sediment mgt team.
- 1        11. Cost share requirements for Continuing Authority program
- 1        13. Sand wars (information to inform competition for sediment resources in a region)
- 1        22. Identify funding needed for Sediment budget studies
- 1        3. State of LA has a new policy to use DM beneficially; COE regularly builds marsh in MS pass in conjunction w/maintenance dredging; WRDA proposal to dredge and slurry pipeline sediment to restoration projects; how funded?